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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 10:50 a.m.

HISTORIC SPENDING CUTS

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1473, a continuing resolution which will fund our government and, most importantly, our troops' families for the rest of the fiscal year and will help generate a better environment for job creation.

While this final agreement is far from perfect—more cuts going forward are absolutely needed—this agreement is a victory for the American people. At \$38.5 billion in cuts, H.R. 1473 represents the largest spending cut since World War II. Domestic spending will actually fall by 4 percent this year with the passage of this CR.

We accomplished this historic cut just months after President Obama asked Congress for a spending freeze. That would have meant zero, nada, nil, cuts in spending this year. In fact, our Federal Government will spend \$78.5 billion less than President Obama proposed this year with the passage of H.R. 1473.

These historic cuts would not be possible without the strong and constant

support of the American people to end the out-of-control spending in Washington. Their voices were heard loud and clear on November 2.

House Republicans were able to translate the people's call for reining in spending into the largest non-defense spending cut in history. Washington is no longer talking about if we should cut spending; we are talking about how much we should cut spending. This is the American people's victory, and they deserve the credit for providing the support and momentum to change our debate.

This bill is also a victory for my home State of Texas and for the good people of the 22nd Congressional District, whom I am honored to represent here in Washington. Importantly, H.R. 1473 repeals the Doggett amendment, a heavy-handed regulation that was forcing Texas, and only Texas, to violate its own constitution and spend education funds as the Federal Government dictated while giving every other State in the Nation the flexibility to spend their funds as they see fit.

The Doggett amendment, which was inserted in last summer's State government bailout bill, singled out Texas by attaching unconstitutional strings to \$830 million in funding. No other State faced such treatment.

Teachers across Texas have faced the threat of losing their jobs with this expected shortfall in education money. But passage of this bill will right this egregious wrong for the great State of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this measure today means we will have succeeded in reducing discretionary spending to pre-bailout stimulus levels. We will be lowering the baseline for next year's budget, which will result in hundreds of billions of dollars in savings over the next decade.

Most importantly, we are setting the stage for the real challenge that comes next: cutting trillions in spending

through the new Republican budget, the Path to Prosperity. We didn't get into this financial crisis overnight, and we are not getting out of it overnight.

But today, for the first time in years, Washington will begin to tighten its belt, just as families across America do every day. This is just the beginning of an important first step forward in changing the culture of spending the people's tax dollars with reckless abandon. America is open for business again.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 1473.

REPEAL DME COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HARTZLER). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, 4 years ago I began to express my concerns about the competitive bidding program that CMS proposed for durable medical equipment. The goal of the program was laudable—to save money and to cut waste, fraud, and abuse from the Medicare program—but the implementation of the program has been fraught with problems.

This issue is of particular importance to me because the Pittsburgh region, which I represent, was one of the first nine regions chosen by CMS to implement the competitive bidding demonstration. As I learned more about the design of the program, it became clear that CMS did not foresee the unintended consequences that could result, including the possibility that patients could lose the personal relationship they've developed with their local provider, in turn compromising their quality of care; or the possibility that small suppliers, which make up well over 90 percent of the Nation's medical equipment providers, would not be able to compete in the new market.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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